

URBAN DESIGN PANEL

The UDP reviewed this application for a second time on February 2, 2022, and provided the following comments:

EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (8-0)

- **Introduction:**

Hamid Shayan, development planner, began by noting this is the 2nd Urban Design Panel at Development Permit stage for 1075 Nelson St. At the previous meeting on Dec 1st, 2021, the panel's members recommended resubmission with (5/1 votes) due to major comments and concerns.

In this presentation, I am going through the design modifications from last UDP subject of addressing the previous panel's recommendations.

I would like to mention that Staff welcome all comments from the panel members and would consider them in their further review process however support or nonsupport of this proposal is based on how the new design responded to the panel's previous initiated comments.

The scope of work is to develop a 60-storey passive house residential building that will be the first of its kind in the world. The FOD is approved by Council and endorsed by UDP at RZ. Since the last meeting, staff have been working closely with the applicant to respond properly to the comments and feedbacks from the panel.

The design of the ground plane has been addressed to improve the relationship of the building with its surrounding, create a more comfortable, engaging environment for pedestrians, building occupants, and encourage neighborliness and community building.

The design modification to achieve these goals include:

- The new Glass canopy around the building to emphasize more on building expression at grade
- Series of radiating planters create seating areas to be used by residents and neighbours
- Central seating area adjacent to a sculpture that creates meeting place which is accessible from both entries

At the north side some revisions are proposed such as:

- Revising the planters at west and east sides to provide more openness and at the lane at the west side
- At the east, these changes have resulted a large enclosed area for children
- Changing the colors and provision of more openings on the north elevation

Since last UDP, by revising landscape design, the functional and usable area of outdoor amenities at grade in increased. The children's play area is maintained at the same location but some improvements at the layout arrangements are done.

From last UDP, more design modifications been executed in rooftop outdoor amenity areas such as the stairs is designed and detailed programming for different areas been introduced.

As the building is intended to be the most advanced passive house tower in the world the design, materiality and detailing pushes the architectural language of what is normally associated with passive house design. Noted that the overall form, architectural expression and colour supported at RZ and endorsed by Urban Design Panel.

Since last UDP some refinements been proposed such as removing the green color and differentiate the balconies from rest of the façade by reducing the horizontal bands.

At the end, Mr. Sailen Black, senior green building planner, provided a summary of green building policy related to the project. He noted that the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings requires that rezoning applications satisfy either the near zero emission buildings or low emissions green buildings conditions within the policy. In addition, the Higher Buildings Policy, which allows for consideration of building proposals in the city's downtown seeking significant additional height above current zoning, requires that applications should advance the City's green objectives for carbon neutrality for new buildings by demonstrating leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption.

He also noted that the voluntary selection of Passive House by the applicant demonstrates leadership in sustainable design and exceeds the requirements of both policies. The standard is a rigorous 3rd party verification process that provides a dramatic reduction in energy use which helps respond to Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency. Its application at this scale of building will also help build the supply of advanced building components and local consulting capacity, exemplified by the ongoing work by the consultants who brings considerable expertise in the design of high-performance buildings. Throughout the process the applicants have demonstrated consistent commitment to incorporating Passive House into the design of the building envelope and its systems.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

Does the new DP proposal successfully address the concerns previously voiced by the Urban Design Panel? With respect to:

- contextual relationship, neighbourliness, and community building through ground plane activation;
- social sustainability through arrangement and programming of amenities;
- passive house and residential nature of the tower through architectural expression and materiality.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted they are working with IBI group and Integral group. A key design driver from the outset was to create a passive house building that does not look like a passive house. The goal is for individuals to look at the building as a way forward. The building color pallet includes a metallic grey. The building is all about the sculpture nature. The undulation on the east west façades makes the building look taller and more elegant.

The applicant noted they have had extensive conversations with manufacturers of panel and glazing. This project will be the stepping-stone of new ways of doing things. The building is very resilient to heat and cold waves. This will be a zero emissions building as well as passive house; this project will be the largest passive house to date.

LANDSCAPE

- There are spaces indoor and outdoor that allow for socialization.
- There is horizontal and vertical planting.
- There are canopies above that protect gathering spaces below.
- The pedestrian traffic flow is uninterrupted on the east and west sides of the building.
- At the lane, side outdoor rooms have been created with low planters. Have also created transitions zones at the building base.
- By the use of louvre, walls and green planters a buffer between private and public areas have been created.
- There is a fair amount of transparency to keep in line with the septid principles.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. THAKRE** and **MR. RAHBAR** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

1. Reduction of impervious material at the ground plane and inclusions of natural materials;
2. Design Development of the tower base and canopy element;
3. Relocation of the child play area to the Nelson St side of the site;
4. Design Development of the east/west slots of the building elevation.

Related Commentary:

- There was general support from the panel.
- There was a strong support for the structural form of the project.
- Members noted the applicant had taken steps to address the previous UDP concerns and the project was a good addition to the skyline.
- A panelist noted the tower stops; there is no hierarchy and the site contradicts any organic design.
- There was concern with the materiality for the façade it comes across very corporate and not welcoming.
- Another panelist noted the form of the building feels oppressive, rigid, and relentless.
- There was general support for the improvements to the ground plane, it is effective and enhances the neighborhood site.
- A panelist noted there are multiple fronts with too much paving on the ground plane however the ground plane development is an improvement in terms of the programmatic activation. There is a better relationship with the mid-block and outdoor space.
- The connection between the interior and exterior needs to be stronger.
- There was concern from the panel regarding the location of the play space and recommended the space needs to move to south side of the building.
- A panelist recommended further development at the lane and the entrance to the lane.
- The materiality light effects and subtle measuring of sky and ground plane is elegant and poetic.
- The panel noted slightly backdrop reflective panels is better.
- A panelist supported the removal of the green stripe.
- There were mixed opinions, for and against, regarding the new developments of the slots east and west of the building elevation.
- Regarding the landscape, a panelist noted there was too much paving to green ratio. There are trees missing on the west side of the garden. Trees make a difference in minimizing the heat island effect.
- The canopies have a strange proportion, do not see it providing or protecting much from shade or shadow.
- Other panelists noted the weather protection had improved.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

URBAN DESIGN PANEL

The UDP reviewed this application for the first time on December 1, 2021, and provided the following comments:

EVALUATION: Resubmission Recommended (5-1)

Planner's Introduction:

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is the DP application at 1059-1075 Nelson St. The scope of work is to develop a 60-storey passive house residential building contains 501 units, all above 10 level of underground parking. The FOD is approved by Council and already endorsed by UDP.

This presentation is aiming to highlight design modifications from Rezoning to DP subject of addressing the previous panel's recommendations and Urban Design Rezoning Conditions.

The proposed application has been approved at public hearing on April 28th 2020 to rezone from RM_5B (residential) to CD-1 .The proposed CD-1 Bylaw allows for a maximum height of 585 ft. and a maximum density of 24.7 FSR. The proposed building contains a mix of market strata, market rental and social housing units. This project is located in a unique and busy block at central business district shoulder and will be surrounded by some significant landmark buildings.

This proposal is governed by several council - approved policies including CD-1 bylaw, West End community plan, and higher building policies. At Rezoning, staff concluded that this building complies with policies objectives such as: Built Form Guiding Principles: Reinforce the Dome-Shaped Skyline, Strengthen the Urban Frame, Adhere to Prevailing View Corridors, Recognize Transitional Role in Form and Scale.

As it was mentioned, the proposal at Rezoning was reviewed and supported by the Urban Design Panel on June, 2019 (12 to 1) subject of following recommendations:

- Further shaping and sculpting of the crown form.
- Further design development of the building form to help mitigate the floor plate in relation to the ground plane and public realm.
- Further design development of the public realm to support the interaction of the neighborhood.
- Explore and provide options for the public amenities.
- Further reconsideration of the gap and its functionality in terms of meeting sustainability objective and growing capability of the plant material.
- Further consideration of the indoor and outdoor amenities for residents.

The overall form of development which approved by council, complies with CD-1 and all applicable policies in terms of overall height, tower foot print area, tower siting and separation, and view and shadowing. The application also proposes to meet the Passive House standard to achieve significantly lower energy consumption, which meets the enhanced energy requirements of the policy. Staff considered the passive house as an innovative approach which contributed the tallest passive house building to the City.

Besides that, the curved outline as the most distinctive visual feature of the tower is maintained during the development process of the application, and helps it to respond to the expectation of the Higher Buildings Policy. The applicant is also considering an improved window system for this Passive House project that would allow them to use less insulation. Sustainability is supportive of the change in glazing in principle, because it helps advance the technology around zero emissions buildings. It will slightly increase the FSR and staff approved to add text amendment in CD-1 bylaw to address this change.

Since RZ the design has the following modifications:

- The midblock connection has been proposed inside the property by provision of 2.5 m right of way from lane to Nelson St which will be connected to the adjacent property's inter connection.
- The floor plate has been revised and increased at ground plane.

- Direct access to the elevators provided for social housing from Nelson Street and it is separated from amenity.

As a result of these changes, the diagonal columns are eliminated and the building connected to the ground by extending the columns and vertical elements. Some adjustments have been implemented in the lobby and building interface to Nelson St. The gaps in the massing have been removed and the elevations have been softened. The green metal cladding has been introduced as a lighting strategy. The loading requirements has been met at the lane. The H- shape floor plate has been simplified to a more rectangular form. The previous landscaped gaps have been converted to the regular 5-6' deep balconies the strata market units' amenity floor has been moved up to the 60th floor from level 16. So the large cantilevered balcony has been eliminated.

In RZ staff recommended to consider quality, appearance, durability and energy performance of materiality and detailing to be integral to design intent. The crown has been revised by provision of mural walls. The DP shows smoothing out the envelope to eliminate the steps. This requires sloping the glass and horizontal metal band to simply follow the curve. With all the design refinements there is no change of shadowing particularly on Nelson Park and school from RZ.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Overall Design Development and Materiality
 - a) Please comment on the overall evolution of the proposed building design, architectural expression, articulation of massing, and material pallet between Rezoning and Development Permit.
 - b) Does the proposal establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence.
2. Public Realm
 - a) Please provide feedback on the overall evolution of public realm interface between Rezoning and Development Permit with particular consideration of:
 - i. How the building transitions to and interfaces with the ground plane;
 - ii. The quality of the public realm and building interface at the lane;
 - iii. The overall performance of the north-south through-block connector as an active and inviting pedestrian link.
3. Sustainability, Microclimate and Biodiversity
 - a) Please comment about the building's contribution to these aspects in relationship to its anticipated architectural excellence.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Principle changes:

- The middle internal openings that were previously there, the benches were already removed. The entire change to the plate that occurred was a compression of it to keep the area the same but to alleviate and get more setbacks on the sides.
- Another change was the built form in the materiality is the skin itself. Before it was a made up of a series of terraces where everything was orthogonal. Now it is a smooth form that runs all the way up. The smooth form is made up of three tones of metal panel. There is still the silver band for the horizontals, a dark charcoal for the verticals and the green band in the middle as an accent that runs up both lane side

and street side of this project. Lighting will be added to make building notable and seen from distant views, an iconic building on the skyline.

- At grade, the columns are pushed into the building face to increase public realm. There is one side dedicated to the community to have pedestrian walkway with bench seating and planters. On the alternate side facing the neighbor there is more private area for the affordable housing component.
- Also at grade, the indoor amenity space was enhanced and programmed, it was left a bit looser at Rezoning stage, now it shows meeting rooms, lounge, family area, storage and office.
- The mid-level amenity space was re-located to the upper level of the building. Everyone in the building will be getting all the high level views not just the penthouse units.
- On the roof apartment it use to be a private deck for the penthouse units, now it will be a public amenity for the building.
- There is an elevator access that connects the amenity indoor to the amenity outdoor which is one level lift and will not require to increase the size of the apartment.
- The apartments remain the same height, everything is compressed into that volume for the mechanical purposes that is required.
- The detailing of the railing is intended to be a clear glass rail without any vertical extensions. It will be a high end detail and there are curve glass on those balconies.
- At top of the building, it was made up of segmented rings that were sticking out of the façade and straight at the top, there has been a slight re-curved inwards but it is now a smooth form curving inwards. This subtle change will make the building look smoother, cleaner, and simpler in its design.
- The intention of the feature at the top behind the glass is to create something artful on the wall, it is a feature that will be colourful and textural and will be seen from various buildings around town from distance views.
- Landscape goals are to foster resilience, sustainable and healthy communities in the west end context.
- To achieve these goals landscape provides the following design solutions:
 - Along Nelson, mature trees will be made and concrete sidewalks will be re-paved.
 - The south side landscape along Nelson Street has three pocket plazas, one in front of each entry and one in the middle. Bike racks are provided at each entry plaza. Aligning with the center of the building, a sculpture creates the focal point in front of the building. Planters and wavy seating on both sides frame this pocket plaza. The planters will use the same material as the building facade.
 - The east side landscape features pedestrian pathway connecting Nelson Street and Ted North Lane. This space is generously sized by an enhanced 2.47m wide SRW on this property, which is contiguous with the existing 2.47m wide SRW path on the neighbouring property. The pathway is characterized by planter beds with integrated seating that allow clear sightlines from both public roadways for safety. Extensive planting beds provide a pleasant green open space in which to relax.
 - The west side landscape features a large outdoor patio, an edible landscape area, and children's play area adjacent to, and visible from, the social housing lobby and indoor amenity room. Continuous planting beds at the perimeter of these spaces provide privacy from the public roadways. The fence along the property's west boundary is designed to provide privacy while maintaining the neighbour's access to natural light.

- Including edible and native plants throughout the site.
- Bird friendly design.
- Level 21 to rooftop amenity was created to have a large social gathering area.
- The outdoor amenity space for market housing is on the mechanical roof level, and includes a hot tub, lounge area, BBQ area and seating area. Planters with trees and groundcover define the various areas.
- Integrate as much planting as possible to help with stormwater management.
- Regarding glazing, the original design had a window system that had a thick wall assembly to reach passive house levels. Looking at solutions to include curtain walls that can still achieve the thermal targets. There are discussions also with manufacturers to use vacuum glass.
- Sustainability, it is meeting the City of Vancouver targets as a passive house building.

Applicant took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. BONIFACE** and seconded by **MR. CUDDINGTON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Recommend Re-submission** to the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- 1) Design development to improve activation of the ground plane and public realm to better foster neighbourliness and community building.
- 2) Design development to how tower hits the ground to enhance contextual relationship and neighbourliness of ground plane.
- 3) Design development to increase quantity of amenity and arrangement of rooftop amenity space and proposed programming and improve social sustainability.
- 4) Design development to architectural expression and materiality to speak more to the passive house and residential nature of project and the origin of design concept, including east and west facades.
- 5) Consider relocating children's play area to south west corner of site.

Panel Commentary

- There was strong support for achieving Passive House and provision of social housing.
- There were mixed comments on the evolution from Rezoning to the development permit stage. Some noted the benefits of simplification and others noted a de-volution that was less than hoped for.
- Some panelists noted the concept for the form and materiality have become dis-associated from the origin of the project, some describing it as a diagram that has not developed.
- Some panelists noted the opportunity for passive house uniqueness could be expressed on the building rather than using green paint and light.

- Panel noted the building feels quasi-residential and quasi-office, feeling more corporate than residential.
- Some panelists noted the unique form for a passive house is refreshing i.e. the balconies are hiding the inner walls of the building, adding variations that one might not see on a passive house.
- Panelists noted the contextual relationship and neighbourhood fit should be considered.
- Some panelists noted appreciation for the quietness and simplicity of expression.
- Panel lamented the loss of landscape on the building.
- Panel noted concerns for resolution of building at top and bottom of building.
- Panel noted the crown is more defined.
- A panel member noted the architectural creativity is evident especially the glazing.
- A panel member noted the site looks less congested than it did at Rezoning in particular the bottom two floors.
- Panel suggested further design development of the tower to ground plane.
- A panel member encouraged using the height to its advantage by sculpting the top and making it more elegant. The parti is not clear.
- Panel noted the removal of the protruding amenity deck since Rezoning makes the form more cohesive, and there is much improvement to the column at grade being less congested.
- Panel noted concerns with the ground plane. There were suggestions to activate the ground level to provide more open space. Currently, it is lacking and pinched around the building and is dismissive of context.
- Some panel members were concerned the ground plane was more abrupt than needs to be and suggested changing the colour or depth to give it a more smooth appearance. Another panel member noted when the tower hits the ground plane the acute corners feel very abrupt. It was also noted how the building lands on the ground is very dismissive. There is no clear relationship with landscape and programming.
- Panel noted a lost opportunity by filling in the bands with residential rather than communal space. The original scheme had open spaces with planting going all the way up the building. The current scheme feels the building is packed with residential space.
- A panel member noted with 501 units going into the neighbourhood there are concerns with density and impact on the sense of community.
- Panel noted the separation of the amenities, encouraging more mixed uses and better connections.
- One Panelist noted a single entry would be beneficial, rather than separate market and non-market entries.
- Panel noted there was a loss of green space from Rezoning to the development permit stage.

- Panel noted the children's play area lacks sunlight. Panel suggested moving the children's play area to the south west corner which could help support the social interaction of the project.
- A panel member noted the kids play area could use more naturalistic elements with a focus towards younger kids as there is already a park and elementary school nearby.
- Panel suggest design development to the separation of the parkade ramp from the pedestrian spaces.
- Panel noted the central seating area would benefit from greater consideration of programming and design.
- Regarding the street right of way, Panel noted there is a lack of programming and it needs more activation.
- Panel noted there is a lack of amenity and suggested giving the extra FSR gained from using thinner walls to achieve Passive House to provide greater amenity.
- One panel member noted separation of indoor and outdoor amenity at the roof could be better connected.
- Outdoor amenity for the non-market does not feel sufficient.
- One Panel member noted concerns with the livability of units being too small.
- Panel noted there is lack of social sustainability in the project. It is missing neighbourliness and response to context.
- Panel suggested integration of landscape to help with cooling and to further support the sustainability of this project.
- A panel member expressed concern around the green lighting elements, cautions that the impact of lighting regarding dark sky principles and impact on neighbours at night.
- Panel noted green lighting and graphic wall treatment are not enough.
- Panel noted concerns with the colour green. Panel suggest further exploration of a less literal use of a metaphor to be more timeless. In addition, it is not working the metal panels and will look out-dated very quickly.
- Panel noted there is a lack of integration between the landscape, materials and architectural design; and there needs to be reconciliation between landscape and architectural expression. The landscape wood fencing is not supported.
- A panel member noted the planters along the right of way, 900 mm for root volume is not adequate.
- A panel member noted there needs to be more connection to the public realm. Reconsider dividing the planters, relocating the public art to the right of way, and relocating the entry.
- Panel appreciates the highest level of energy efficiency is brought to this project but has concerns with lack of sustainability beyond energy efficiency.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will work with City staff. It is a hardworking building that has a lot of elements that needs to be economical viable to reach sustainability goals. A very challenging project.